

REMARKS

In this response, Claims 15, 17, 19, and 20-23 have been amended. Claim 25 has been canceled, and new Claims 26-39 have been added.

Claim 15 was amended to recite further features of the claimed socket hole and to improve the visual format of the claim.

Claim 17 was amended to replace the recitation of "halves" with "sections." It was also amended to recite that the coupling is partially enclosed within the cavity defined by the first and second flanges of each section of the claimed shielding device. The preamble was also amended to include the transition phrase "comprising the steps of."

Claims 19 and 20 were amended to modify their dependence from Claim 18 to Claim 17 and to replace the recitation of the term "halves" with the term "sections." Minor changes were also made to their preambles to provide consistency with Claim 17.

Claims 21-23 were amended to replace the term "half" with "section."

No new matter was added in the foregoing amendments.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to the phrase "said first and second halves" in Claim 17 as lacking antecedent basis. Applicant has amended Claim 17 to correct the inadvertent

recitation of the term "halves" and replace it with "sections." The Examiner further objected to the recitation of "said inner surface" in Claim 25 as lacking antecedent basis. In this Amendment, Applicant has canceled Claim 25.

Rejection of Claims 15-25 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected Claims 15-25 as anticipated by Corzine, U.S. Patent Re 33,946 ("Corzine"). Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections.

Corzine is directed to an axially split clamp for push on couplings. Claim 15 recites a method of preventing disconnection of a coupling device using a device which includes at least one socket hole defined in one of said first and second halves of the device. It further recites a threaded hole in the other half of the device. The Examiner has not contended that Corzine discloses a socket hole, as claimed. Moreover, Applicant has amended Claim 15 to further distinguish Corzine by reciting that the claimed socket hole has a length comprising a first diameter portion and a second diameter portion, and that the socket hole is enclosed along the first and second diameter portions. Corzine does not disclose these features of Claim 15.

Claim 17 recites a method that comprises providing a device for shielding a coupling which has first and second sections. It further recites that the first and second sections each have a first flange extending from a first peripheral edge

and a second flange extending from a second peripheral edge, wherein the first and second flanges of each section define a cavity. Corzine does not disclose a method which uses a device having these features. While the Examiner contends that each half of Corzine's device have flanges that include holes for receiving the fasteners, those flanges do not extend from a peripheral edge of the device to define a cavity. Thus, Corzine does not anticipate Claim 17.

Claim 21 and new independent Claim 34 are similarly allowable over Corzine. As indicated above, the Examiner has not asserted that Corzine discloses a socket hole as claimed. Assuming, however, that the holes located on the left-most portion of Corzine's device (as depicted in Corzine FIG. 3) can be characterized as socket holes, both socket holes are defined in the same section of the device. In contrast, Claims 21 and 34 recite a configuration wherein the first socket hole and second threaded hole are defined in the first section of the claimed device, the first threaded hole and second socket hole are defined in the second section of the claimed device, and the first and second socket holes are defined on opposite sides of the opening defined by the first and second sections. Corzine does not disclose this structure and cannot anticipate Claim 22.

New independent Claim 26 is also allowable over Corzine. Unlike Corzine, Claim 26 recites a method of preventing disconnection of an odometer cable coupling. It further recites a socket hole structure wherein the socket hole has a length

comprising a first diameter portion and a second diameter portion, and the socket hole is enclosed along the first diameter portion and the second diameter portion. Corzine does not disclose or suggest these features.

New independent Claim 31 recites a method of preventing disconnection of a coupling which includes providing a device that is distinguishable from that disclosed by Corzine. The device of Claim 31 recites a device having first and second flanges extending from first and second peripheral edges to define a cavity. Corzine does not disclose or suggest a method using the claimed structure.

The dependent claims recite additional patentable features and are distinguishable over Corzine as well. In light of the foregoing amendments and arguments, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all claims now pending patentably define the subject invention over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date.

Respectfully submitted,

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